



EXPLORING The Texas Coast

Lesson Plans for Grades K-8



Texas General Land Office
Jerry Patterson, Commissioner

texasadoptabeach.org • 1.877.TXCOAST



FOREWORD



The Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Program

Overview

The Texas Adopt-A-Beach Program is an all-volunteer effort started by the Texas General Land Office in 1986 to rid the state's publicly owned beaches of trash and raise public awareness of the problems associated with marine debris.

According to The Ocean Conservancy, land-based sources contribute 70 percent of all trash found in the ocean and on our Texas beaches. The largest source is trash washed off streets into storm drains that empty directly into streams, rivers, and bays. Each time it rains, runoff from the street picks up litter and other pollutants, which eventually make their way down to the Texas coast. Other land-based sources are items that are left behind by beach goers. Commercial fishing vessels, recreational boats, cargo vessels, and offshore petroleum rigs are just some of the ocean-based sources of marine debris. The various plastic wastes from these sources are among the most pervasive and threatening forms of debris found in our oceans.

Also wreaking havoc on our Texas coast are the loop currents in the Gulf of Mexico. Any item that's dropped in the Gulf of Mexico will eventually make its way to our beaches. We often find trash items from neighboring states and Mexico, but we also see items that make their way to our coast from as far away as China.

Twice each year, volunteers check in at sites along the coast to pick up trash. A fall event is held in September, and the spring cleanup is held in April.

Years of data collection from beach cleanups played an integral part in the passage of MARPOL Annex V, an international treaty that prohibits the dumping of plastics anywhere in the world's oceans. The International Maritime Organization also designated the Gulf of Mexico and the Wider Caribbean as a "special area" where nothing except finely ground food scraps can be discarded.

While the program receives limited funding from the General Land Office, its success is due to support from the private sector. Generous contributions have helped carry our message, "Trashing Texas Beaches Isn't Cool," to thousands of Texans. Help make a difference by donating to the program today! Visit texasadoptabeach.org for more details.

The Adopt-A-Beach Program has won national recognition, both as a beach cleanup effort and as a public awareness campaign, and has prompted the development of similar programs in 55 U.S. states and territories and more than 100 foreign countries.

To find out how you can get involved in one of our cleanups or if you need more information on the program, please visit our website at texasadoptabeach.org or call us toll free in Texas at 1.877.TXCOAST.

We'll see you at the beach!

About the Lesson Plans

Welcome to the Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Program's Lesson Plans. Here, children ages 5 to 14 (grades K through 8) can learn about coastal issues through fun and challenging activities.

There are six lessons, each with a specific message to help students broaden their knowledge of marine debris and coastal issues. Each lesson plan is featured in color for the instructor's use. The corresponding journal pages have been composed in black and white for easy printing and copying.

The Texas General Land Office values your thoughts and feedback. Please provide information about any oversights, errors or omissions, as well as particular activities that students find interesting. Send comments to the Texas General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach Program at beach@glo.texas.gov.